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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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EDITORIAL

Who Are You?

SOMEONE asked us recently what kind of people belong to Fellowship in Prayer, who reads its publications?

Knowing many of our Associate Members personally, we find different images coming to mind – intelligent, perceptive people on a spiritual journey. But the one word that seems to sum up the main characteristic of our friends in Fellowship in Prayer is *magnanimity.*

This is a glorious word that has a sense to it of all that is noble, big-spirited, generous, forgiving, free from vindictiveness or resentment, great-hearted, loving. *Magnanimity* is an attitude that looks at all creation with compassion and tolerance. It is a quality that recognizes that, though you worship according to the traditions of your own faith, you nonetheless appreciate other religious customs as being valid also.

You are not bound by narrow dogmas, and you understand that a dogma isn't in itself the object of faith, but rather a channel "through which you go, within the context of different cultures."

You have a searching mind and want to know more about other religions. You have a growing sense of the oneness of God's truth. Your beliefs grow stronger as you realize that to a large extent the truth of God is verified through other religions.

You understand also that the kind of prayer that encourages us into becoming the best of ourselves creates similar values among people of all races and religions – values of caring deeply, of nonviolence, of inner peace, of the spirit of gratitude and simplicity.

You understand that we live in restless and violent times and that this is a generation longing for inner peace and release from anxiety. You know that the answer is found first of all in your relationship to God (or whatever name you prefer to call this source of all cosmic power) and then in your association with others. "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like it: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." You are more and more aware that this theme runs through all the great religions.

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Brother Eric speaks of meditation through his art. . .

Enter Into My Paintings

By PETER & MARY P. FUNK

Photographs by Cliff Moore

The taxi lets us off at 413 West 48th Street by an old building in an area once known as Hell's Kitchen in New York City. It was an abandoned building until seventeen months ago. Then some brothers from the Protestant Community of Taizé in France decided to move into the top floor and renovate the structure. Now it is fully occu-

Brother Eric starts a painting and it is filled with things and then bit by bit he paints over it. He compares this with prayer and meditation when our minds are busy and gradually grow quiet.

pied, and the entire block on which it is situated is revitalized. On the street, though, there is still an atmosphere of real poverty.

It's a sunny day and the wind is warm and clean. Young and old people sit on doorsteps or lean against walls casually watching us. They are mostly blacks or Hispanics.

I squint into the hallway's shadows to read the small print: "Taizé, Apt. 13." I press the bell.

"Yes? Who is it, please?" The voice sounds French.

I give our names.

The buzzer buzzes, and we enter a narrow, neat hall and climb four flights to be greeted finally by Brother Eric (pronounced *air-eek*). He is moderately tall, lean, his face tanned and lightly sketched with lines. He has a caring warmth about him that typifies so many of the dedicated people we know.

Brother Eric is an internationally known artist whose paintings hang in leading museums. It is typical of him that, when the late Nelson Rockefeller was buying one of his paintings, he suggested he would prefer not selling it to him if it was going to be stored in a vault. He was assured it would be hung in the Governor's home where people could enjoy it.

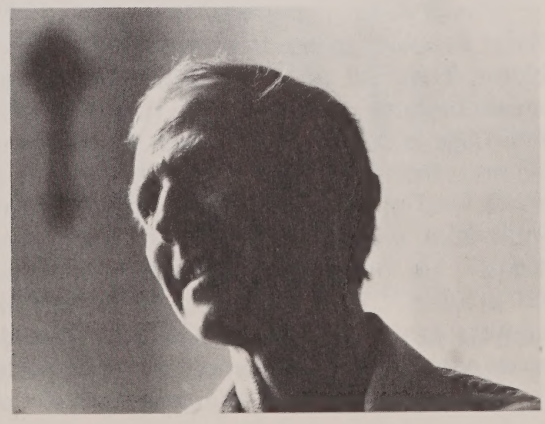
The noonday service to which we have been invited takes place in a small, bare room one flight below. We are joined there by two other brothers. Some kneel, others sit. In front of an icon painted by Eric, which resembles the skyline of New York, there are three lighted candles. Into the silence come rock music from a nearby radio and street sounds. A Psalm is sung, next a hymn, and finally, in French, an anthem of praise from the Taizé community.

Although we are fascinated by the concept of Taizé and by how its brothers work and live throughout the world (and will report on the community in a future issue), our purpose is to talk with Eric about the relationship between art and worship.

When we tell him this, he says, "For me, art is an act of love. It is a way of worshipping something God has made, and it makes me alive. Do you feel something like this? Formerly I used to paint in my room or studio and then I would stop work and go to the church and worship. Now it's different. For me art is a different way of worshipping. A way of getting an answer to an inner question. I think to myself: 'Why do I use this color?' I try to do one thing and then something else comes out. Why is that? I find I am filled with deep questions."

We say that, in ancient Russia, an artist would pray before painting an icon and that the sacred personna was transmitted through him to the icon.

"Prayer is in everything. You discover God everywhere."



"Many artists meditate through their paintings. Rothko said he was a monk. . . ."

"Yes," Eric says, "those artists made the icons with prayer and fasting. For several years I explored that way of doing it. The use of gold is interesting. In a dark church gold is a living thing. At one time icons had meaning because almost everyone in eastern and western Europe understood the symbols and images. Now these images are not known or recognized."

"Is your art, then, a kind of icon for today?"

"Yes," he says, "in a symbolic way. My art has gone from being pictures to being abstracts. I think a piece of art is just to be amazed by. As if you were looking at a flower. It's to be appreciated, not analyzed."

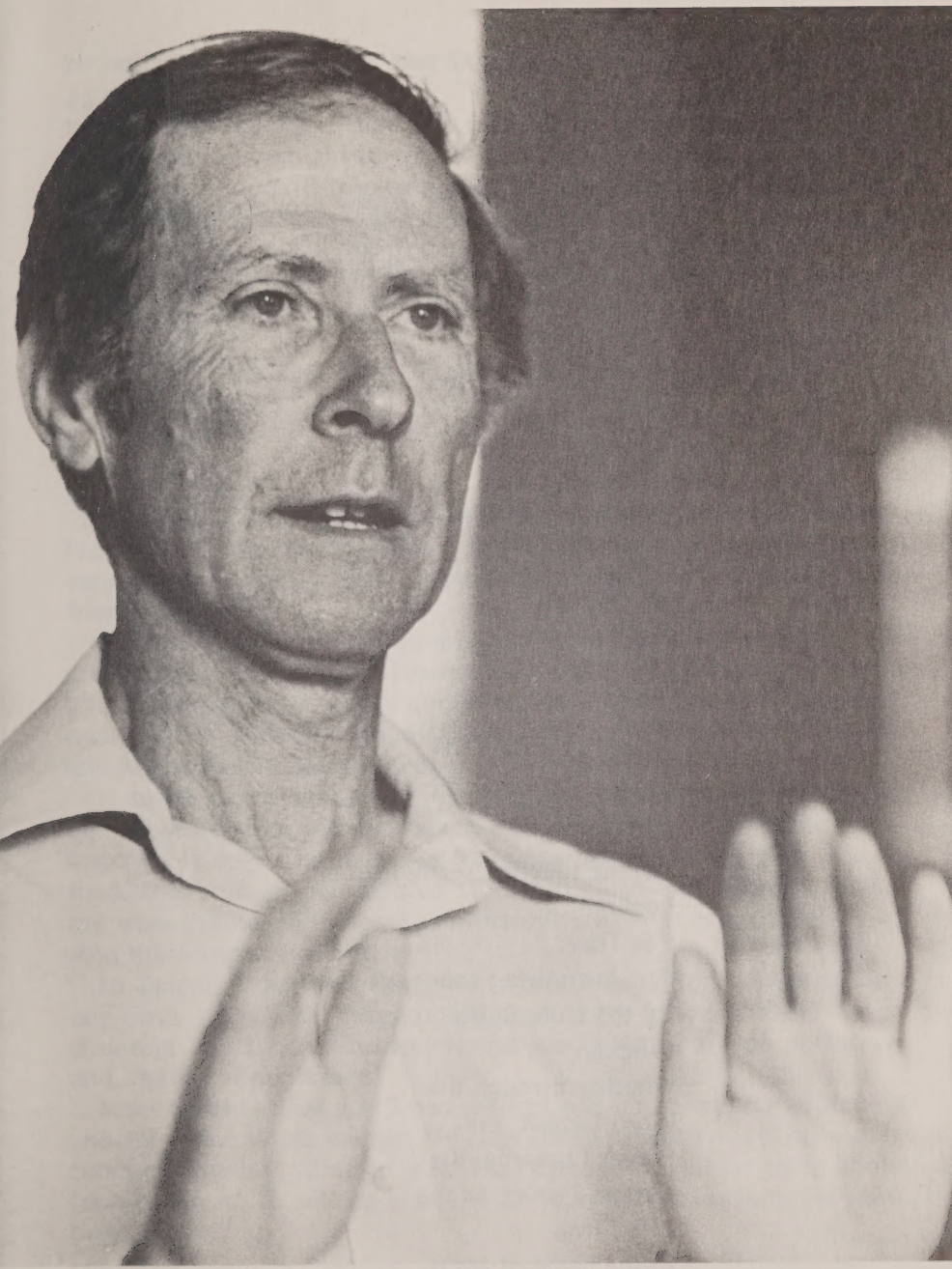
"How can you encourage people to appreciate art? It's the last thing people will look at or think about."

"Saint Paul tells us that someone who speaks in tongues needs a translator," Eric says, "and art resembles this gift of tongues. An artist is like a translator. He's the translator of an inner experience. That's the way I look at my art. People can enter into what I feel, but they need a time of rest to do it. Many people walk into a museum and just glance at the pictures. They don't enter into them. I am surprised how many young people go to the Guggenheim Museum, for example. The younger generation will be the one to understand this kind of art. Twenty years ago who understood Picasso or John Cage, the composer? This is a new language—a non-verbal language."

"Would it be amiss to say that just as it takes time for me to 'see' a painting because it is so open to a broad spectrum of communication, the same concept would apply as well to the relationship between individuals? That is, if one is quiet with another, it opens them both up to see the beauty in each other without preconceptions?"

"That's exactly the way it is. A way of passing through barriers. What happens to art is that people are so tired, have so many problems. They ask to be distracted without effort. We listen to certain music because we are used to it and no effort is necessary. Someone like Cage is demanding to listen to. He has something new to say and doesn't feel an obligation to please you. I hope people will make some kind of effort to enter into my paintings to 'see' them. Try to look at a painting for three or four minutes without preconceptions." He pointed to a large green-flowing picture with subtle undertones. "That green picture . . . It's like a TV screen on which viewers can project their own lives. I've done my work. Now they must enter into it and complete it—complete it for themselves."

"Has eastern religion influenced you?"



"I follow as an artist what is deepest in me. My painting is prayer. At one time there was a division between my prayer and my worship. But, as the mystics know, eventually all things you love become one. . . ."

"I read a lot about the East and take it into my meditation. It comes out in my art."

We look around the studio and see that Eric's paintings reflect different times and different expressions of his meditations. In one there is a stillness, although the thin edge of distraction impinges on it. In another the shape and color are restless and there is no peace. One that especially entices is created from shades of blue, shade flowing into shade, against a background of blue. And there is one that captures the moment of quiet rejoicing, of giving praise and thanksgiving.

A DAILY PRAYER

All through this day,
O Lord,
Let me touch as many lives as
possible
For Thee.
And every life I touch, do thou
By thy Holy Spirit
Quicken,
Whether through the
Word I speak, the
Prayer I breathe, the
Letters I write, or the
Life I live.
In the name of Jesus
Christ.

(Contributed by Betty Barjou)

"I Long For Journey's End"

BROTHER PAUL, Society of Saint Francis

THIS September I will be seventy-four years old. It has been a very happy life. It has been fulfilling and rewarding. God has indeed been very good to me. I have enjoyed the sights and the sounds, the friends and work.

But the last few years I have begun to realize that this journey is a pilgrimage, and I long for journey's end. When I was a boy away at school, it seemed the Christmas holidays would never come so I could join old friends and my loving family. And oh! the excitement and joy of the trip back home!

It seems to me that death is like going home for Christmas. God is our all-wise and ever-loving father, and to die is to return home to his love. He is love. His love is a free unearnable gift and given for all time. It is true, of course, that he is also judge—but he is judge *and* my wise and loving father. I can trust his judgment as I trust his love. And this I know: he loves *me*!

In January I had an emergency prostate operation. It was cancerous, and the cancer has spread apparently to my whole bone-structure and to one kidney. Where else it may be, I do not know and, frankly, I don't care.

I am delighted because I can see not too far ahead that journey's end for which I have waited. My bags are all packed, and Christmas is coming! Whatever time of year God calls me, I will be going home for Christmas. It will be a merry Christmas. Rejoice with me—and pray! I love you.

The Importance Of The Bhagavad Gita

By J.P. VASWANI

THE VEDA, the Avesta, the Dhammapada, the Bible, the Qur'an, the Bhagavad Gita — all the sacred scriptures — call upon us to open the spiritual eye and behold the True, the Good, the Beautiful, the Holy.

The Gita speaks of three ways, three *margas* the *karma marga,* the way of selfless action; the *gnana marga,* the way of wisdom; and the *bhakti marga,* the way of devotion. There are many ways: the goal is one.

The ways are as many as are the souls of men. And the Gita teaches that all the ways lead the seeker to the One Supreme. "On whatever path men approach Me," says the Lord (Sri Krishna) in the Gita, "on that I go to meet them, for all the paths are Mine, verily Mine."

The Gita is singularly free from sectarianism. "I am in every religion," says the Lord, "as a thread through a string of pearls."

The Gita is a world-scripture that has a timeless message. Though the message was delivered five thousand years ago, it has much to teach us today — we, of a later and larger growth, who are sons and daughters of an excited, agitated age.

The emphasis in the teaching of the Gita is on life, not words. No not merely chant the *slokas* of the Gita, but bear witness to the great teaching in deeds of daily living. Therefore live a dedicated life. The model man of the Gita is he who beholds the Light shining in the heart within, but not on that account withdraws from the world. He devotes himself to a life of duty—the duty of his daily task, the duty he owes his family, community, country, humanity, the duty he owes to birds and animals, for he realizes that birds and animals are man's younger brothers and sisters in the family of Creation.

He does his duty in love. He does his work in a spirit of detachment. Love must be blended with detachment. For naked must the swimmer dive into the sea to find the pearl. He who would find the "pearl of great price" should live in the world, stripping himself of all attachment. Beautiful are the words of a Sufi singer:

Penance and pilgrimage,
Fasting and rituals,
Learning and scholarship
Avail little!
The Goal is attained

When the two streams
Of love and renunciation
Mingle, flowing together into the sea!

From the mingling of love and renunciation arises inward light. It leads the seeker on.

Today a number of "spiritual teachers," in India and outside, tell their disciples that for God-realization renunciation is not necessary.

Jesus said, "You cannot serve two masters." Without renunciation there can be no spiritual progress. True renunciation is inner. You are not asked to renounce the world and dwell in the depths of a forest of meditation or on the peak of a hill. Live in the world but be attached to no form, no finite thing. Live in a spirit of detachment, knowing that no one, nothing, belongs to you, that you belong to God.

Do your daily work, attend to your daily tasks, but do not forget God for a single moment. "Love God and do what you like," said St. Augustine. And it was a Sufi mystic who said, "The true saint goes in and out amongst the people and eats and sleeps with them and buys and sells in the market and marries and takes part in social intercourse, and never forgets God for a single moment."

The Gita is essentially a song of life. It shows how man, who lives a life of separation, may be united with the Source. Man has been separated from the Eternal in whom is his home. Hence his restlessness. There is restlessness in all our work, even in our service. Therefore our service does not bless. "Can the sound of the word 'service' deceive the Lord?" asked Maharishi Raman. "Does He not know? Is He waiting for these people's service?" And Swami Sivananda said, "God does not want precious presents. Many people spend millions of rupees in opening hospitals and feeding-houses. But they do not give their hearts."

Travelling across the centuries comes the word of the Lord:

This be my Supreme to Thee,
O Arjuna!
Let go thy rites and writ duties:
Come to Me for single refuge!
Bring thy heart to Me!
Fix thy thoughts on Me!
Service Me! Worship Me!
Cling in faith and love and reverence to Me!
So shalt thou come to Me!
And I shall free thee
From the bondage of sin!

Walking the way of "loving surrender," man may reach God and be one with Him.

I Became A Muslim

By JOHN ALLEE

Sometimes you have to go away a very long distance in order to come back a short distance correctly

—THE ZOO STORY by Edward Albee

MY JOURNEY took me farther away than many. I went through many countries and religions—from the America of 1970 to Europe and the Middle East and finally in 1975 to Pakistan.

Karachi, Pakistan— In a sun-drenched mosque on a warm afternoon, I sat under the thwak-thwak of the ceiling fan. As its breeze circled down around me and took away the desert heat, an old man dressed in white, with a white beard and merry eyes, asked me questions. My fiance Feroza translated his Urdu into English for me, but his and my eyes understood each other, anyway.

His questions were simple.

Did I believe in God?

"Yes."

Was I able to be in contact with Him every moment of my life?

"Yes."

Did I believe God had a father, a son, brothers, daughters, a mother?

"No."

Did I believe that throughout history there have appeared many prophets, men given the glorious opportunity and duty of carrying God's message to the world?

"Yes."

That among these prophets were Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, and others?

"Yes, peace be upon them all."

Did I believe in an afterlife and a day of judgment, when everything I had been and done would speak either for or against me?

"Yes."

As I gave my answers, I realized there was no escape-hatch in his questions. By being good, I was not doing God any favors. I was doing it for myself, because on the day of judgment it would all come out.

The questions went on and on.

Did I believe in the angels and the revealed books and scripture?

"Yes."

"Then praise be to God," the old man said. "You are a Muslim!" His eyes grew merrier and he shook my hand.

THREE YEARS earlier, in a library in Syria, I had read the Holy Qur'an for the first time. Like the old man's questions, it was simple, direct, and clear. "Serve God and eschew evil. . . ," "Those who believe in God and His apostles. . .shall soon be given their rewards."

By becoming a Muslim, I had rewards in store for me. I also gained a noble perspective. I now believed in all the prophets. Mohammed, peace be upon him, was the last of the line. And the book he had brought, the Holy Qur'an, existed today as it was first revealed.

After saying goodbye to my questioner, Feroza and I walked back from the mosque along the narrow hard-baked lanes that passed for streets. We felt clean inside. At peace.

I REMEMBERED two years before, in Afghanistan, when I lived in a big house with another old man as my housekeeper. This old man looked like a picture of Lao Tzu—short, round body, round face, bald head, little wispy beard. It was Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting. At five in the morning and eight at night, the cannon went off on top of the highest hill in Kabul to signal the beginning and ending of the fast. The poor Muslims, I thought then. Being a good sahib, though, I relieved my housekeeper of his kitchen duties during the fast and prepared the food myself. How that old man looked at me! At first I thought he might be hungry. After a couple of days, it dawned on me. Was he pitying me? His lips moved. Was he praying and asking forgiveness for me?

It was too much for me. If he could fast, I decided, I could too. So, with sign-language and a few broken words of Farsi, I made a pact with him: "You no eat, I no eat. Sundown. You eat, I eat!"

The fast was not easy for me. After the first days of it, however, I went over the hump and did not want food. Oh yes, when sunset came, I gave thanks and ate with appreciation, but during the fast I didn't think of food. In fact, I would turn away from it when it was offered.

SO NOW, two Ramadans later, I had become a Muslim. That I became one was very much thanks to my old housekeeper in Kabul: his faith and obedience. It was also thanks to the sort of simplicity, clarity, and directness in the other old man who had put the questions to me.

Of course, my journey isn't over. It never is. Daily there is the battle to feel that simplicity—that miracle—again. I have had to go away a very long distance in order to come back a short distance correctly. But, after finding my way once, I know the way. I know that journey, trek, trip, search—call it whatever you like—is really inside myself.

RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE PHOTO

Under
The Mango Tree

By GEORGIANA LIEDER LAHR

And I?
I lie content
As a young child
In summer's quiet lap.

PHOTO BY CLIFF MOORE

QUALIFYING TO DO HIS WILL

By GLADYS STURMAN

RABBI Samuel Silver, Fellowship in Prayer trustee, in his weekly column in the *B'nai Brith Messenger* invited us to write you about our concepts of prayer.

I go to the synagogue regularly to pray. Why do I do that? Do my prayers make me a better person? Do they in any way influence God?

I believe we pray because we cannot do otherwise. Prayer is our response to the inconceivable surprise of being alive. Prayer is a recognition of the mystery of the universe. We pray in an attempt to integrate ourselves with a holy dimension of existence. There is a Jewish saying—"As a tree torn from the soil, as a river separated from its source, so the human soul wanes and dies when it is detached from that which is greater than itself."

The purpose of prayer is not to compel God to do our will but to qualify us to do His will. We desire of ourselves the kind of perfection that the limitations of existence render impossible. Yet we believe that whatever ought to be, can be, and that our yearning for a better world is a sign of its eventual realization.

As a Jew, I pray to identify myself with the brotherhood of the Jewish people, and with Jewish values. (Someone told me he once spent the High Holy Days on a mountaintop in Big Sur. He said he felt closer to God there than in the synagogue. I agreed that one can be close to God anywhere. But if you want to be close to the Jewish people, you must be in a synagogue on Yom Kippur, you must celebrate your joyous occasions and your sorrowful occasions with Jewish prayers.

Personally, prayer is part of my Sabbath—Friday night, an elegant meal, the family all dressed up and singing together around the table. On Sabbath morning, the synagogue and prayer followed by rest, refreshment, and study. On Saturday evening, an almost mystical Havdalah ceremony taking leave of the day with prayer over a goblet of wine by the light of a tapered candle.

Prayer thus enables us to separate the trivial from the significant. Prayer deepens and broadens one's experience of what it means to be a Jew. Prayer furthers the establishment of a better world. Prayer enables us to unify our souls.

PHOTO BY CLIFF MOORE

The conviction that keeps Estelle Parsons acting in spite of herself

The Good Person Inside Everybody

ESTELLE PARSONS says she never had a part she wanted, claims she couldn't name a dream-part if she were asked to, and insists she is really interested nowadays only in directing. (Last spring she made her maiden effort at directing an alternately English- and Spanish-speaking production of *Antony & Cleopatra* in Hell's Kitchen in New York City.) She says her sole reason for acting is to earn her living.

"Why?" I asked in astonishment, though it was obvious from the moment she arrived that she was by no means the ordinary actress, in no way an ordinary woman.

"Because," she said in the utterly clear and forthright voice I first noticed on Dave Garroway's *Today Show*, then in the Oscar-winning movie *Bonnie and Clyde*, and recently in the one-woman show *Miss Margarida's Way* on Broadway. "Movies and TV have ruined the theater. Because of them everything today has got to seem so naturalistic and real. Even the costumes. Today a costume-designer can't get a better notice than to be told that his designs are authentic!"

From a straightbacked chair against the white wall in the living-room which resembeled a parlor in a big old house in New England, the baby-grand strewn with sheet-music, the furniture with blue-and-white needlepoint pillows and a friendly calico cat, the actress gazed into the noon light shining through the windows as brightly as if we were at the seaside instead of in an apartment-house on the upper West Side of Manhattan.

"Because of this rage for everything to be one hundred per cent real," she said, "there's no hope of saying anything stylized or poetic or moral or spiritual in the theater today. Oh, a genius might appear and go against the fashion. But there's no hope of *my* saying what I have to say."

"It's too bad, too," she said matter-of-factly. "Because I began with this wild desire to communicate with strangers. When I was a kid, dressing up in Mother's clothes and writing and staging my own plays at home in Marblehead, that's what I was aiming at—to communicate with strangers."

PHOTO BY MIKE TIGHE

"Something was always there . . ."

"I don't know why it has mattered so much," she added. "Maybe because I wanted to break through all the reticence and rigidity—maybe because I felt guilty that up till then I hadn't been able to."

Breaking through reticence and rigidity clearly mattered to Estelle, who struck me as possessing the very opposites of both qualities as she looked at me through the recently-acquired sausage-curls that tumbled over her forehead and brows like a poodle's pale pink coat.

"In spite of everything I've just said against the theater, plus the fact that a large percentage of the people who attend it can't be communicated with on any level," she said, "I sometimes have this feeling that I can do it somehow. It really matters to me. I have this feeling—I always had it—that everybody in the world has a good person inside them that you can get in touch with if you know how."

"Aside from that ambition, which I nowadays confine mainly to my family and friends, I was never into people much." she said. "As an actress, I have naturally had to be interested in the characters I play, why they do or say certain things. But what interested me from the beginning was not people but the moral thing."

"The moral thing, Estelle?" I said. "What do you mean by that?"

Thoroughly businesslike about being interviewed, starting to talk with me before a single question could be put to her, telling me what she accurately supposed might be of interest, Estelle seemed for a moment to shy away from the phrase "the moral thing."

On her arrival in the living-room with glasses of Tab for us, she had warned me that she was not at all knowledgeable on the subject of prayer. All but simultaneously, however, she let me know that she prayed, and had prayed since she was a child, and still possessed the belief she had then that she was able when things got tight for her "to be in direct communication with God." About Him she disclaimed any understanding . . . except a sense she had always had that "the air was full of things we don't know anything about," except a confidence that "something was always there" for her to count on if she needed to.

Her longing to communicate with strangers, she told me, had begun when she was about twelve. At that age, she had joined the Congregational Church chiefly on account of its name, which seemed to promise contact with lots of strangers. This did not work out as she hoped, however. The preacher disillusioned her by paying a call on the family shortly after she joined and asking her to pledge to give a set amount on Sundays. Already a practical individual, she did not

(Continued on page 36)

PHOTO BY CLIFF MOORE

Late at night in the empty subway of a foreign city a young woman faced a test of trust . . .

NO TICKET HOME

BY MARY DAVIS

THE NIGHT AIR closed in around me. I shivered from the February damp and glanced again at the clock on the platform. If the tube to Whitechapel did not come within the next few minutes, I would miss my connection.

It was nearing midnight, and I knew the gates to the London underground—which is what they call their subway—would be closing soon. Why hadn't I left a few minutes early? Time had vanished and so had my money on the superb dinner out with dear friends who were leaving for Australia tomorrow.

I looked at the clock and then at my watch. Surely the tube

should come by now. I took a deep breath and wrapped my coat around me.

Suddenly the platform conductor shouted, "Closed for the night!"

"But there was supposed to be a train to Whitechapel," I said, trying to hold back the tears.

"Sorry, luv, that's it for tonight."

I bit my lip as the tears began to sting my eyes. What was I going to do? I thought of calling some friends but dismissed the idea because I did not know their number and they lived in another part of town, anyway.

Then, all at once, I knew what to do. I could ask God to get me home. After all, God could do anything.

I had recently become a Christian and knew very little about the Bible. But somehow I had faith in my heart that if I called on my heavenly father, he would personally escort me in his kingly manner. So I prayed: "God, please get me home safely. Thank you."

I then turned around to face the long stretch of empty track and just waited.

The first thing that happened was a tube appeared coming down the track. Although the conductor had said all the tubes were shut down for the night, I wasn't about to argue. As soon as the doors opened, I slipped in and found a seat. The conductor also got on, and an elderly man with white hair which I could see underneath a worn brown-and-white checked hat. Neither of them spoke to me.

As the tube started, I asked the conductor where it was going. I noticed he had a kind face and bright blue eyes. I think we both took a liking to each other.

"Oh, yes," he said after giving me a concerned look, "you are the young lady who missed the connection to Whitechapel. Well, unfortunately, this one isn't going to take you very far. Whitechapel is clear across town. What is a pretty girl your age doing up at this hour of the night?"

I then began to recount the evening's events and how I had been so utterly foolish in not watching my time or my money. My ticket to Whitechapel was useless now.

The conductor looked thoughtful and then suggested various ways by which I might be able to take a bus or cab . . . if, of course, I could find one at such a late hour. But doing that would require money.

The man with the white hair underneath the worn hat had remained silent all this time. But now he fumbled in his pocket and pulled out a one-pound note and insisted that I take it. I refused at first because he was not well-dressed and I thought he might need the

pound for his next meal. As if he could read my thoughts, he said he would not sleep unless he knew I got home safely. He added with great modesty that he was a famous writer and could well spare the pound.

After much prying and pleading, I was able to persuade him to reveal his identity. He was Henry Williamson, who was in fact a very well known English author. Later I discovered that he was especially known for his animal stories and for being something of an eccentric who did not care to be recognized in public. This probably explained his late-night riding of the tubes.

Needless to say, the conductor and I were very impressed and gave him hearty goodbyes when he got off at the next stop.

By this time I was feeling quite elated and looking forward to the rest of my trip home. As the tube sped along, the conductor, inspired by the generosity of Mr. Williamson, said he could arrange to have a special tube take me to Whitechapel which he himself would drive. Naturally, I took him up on it.

When we arrived in Whitechapel, the conductor unlocked the station and wished me good luck. I thanked him for his kindness and gave him a firm handshake.

As he disappeared, I began to feel the chill of morning. The yellowish tint from the streetlamps gave everything an eerie look. There was not a soul around. Everything was still except some water steadily dripping from a nearby building. There was no cab or bus anywhere in sight. I closed my eyes and prayed again: "Lord, you have brought me this far, but I need to go just a bit farther. Please show me what to do next."

I waited quietly and then realized I had Mr. Williamson's one-pound note and could call a cab. I rushed across the street to a telephone-booth and dialed the number. No answer. I hung up and doublechecked the number in the directory. I dialed again. No answer. Perhaps the cabs shut down at midnight, too. "Lord, just a little farther, please!"

I looked up, then, and saw a young couple walking toward me. I ran out to them and asked how I could find a cab at this hour of the morning. They said it was very unlikely that a cab would appear and no bus was running. To their amazement a cab suddenly appeared. The young man leaped out and flagged it. As I climbed in the back seat and sank thankfully into the soft leather, I questioned the driver as to why he was on duty at this hour.

"Oh, I'm not on duty," he said. "For some reason I just couldn't get to sleep tonight, so I decided to go out for an extra midnight fare."

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR PRAYER LIFE

BY PETER

PRAYER can be troublesome and frustrating. As a lay Franciscan in the Episcopal Church, I work as a spiritual counselor, and the most common complaint I hear is: "I'm just not satisfied with my prayer life. . .I can't seem to get hold of it."

One of the reasons for such difficulty with prayer is that all too many people use prayer merely as a church-related activity, when it should permeate the entire fabric of their lives so as to be a real force for growth in the power to love and understand. For example, I had a phone call from a friend who had moved to Florida. Since we knew each other well — had attended a Bible-study group together — I felt free to ask, "Al, how's your prayer life coming along?"

He paused, obviously puzzled.

"Well, I attend church on Sundays, and on Wednesday nights there is Bible-study."

He said nothing about personal prayer. I was struck by the difference between his response and the discussions I have with aspirants to the Franciscan order whom I counsel.

The difference is that two years are spent on aspirants, helping them in the area of prayer and the implementation of it in their lives. We feel those two years are only a foundation that is to be built on for the rest of their days. There is always so much to discuss. Observations often go both ways. Insights help and encourage. It has been

one of the most rewarding parts of my life. So it surprised me to realize suddenly that it is an almost unexplored area to many of the most faithful believers.

As a start, I am going to suggest six ideas which will help you in your personal prayer. In forthcoming issues of this publication I will discuss other aspects.

When you pray by yourself, another dimension enters your life. Your entire life is enriched in ways you cannot anticipate. There are not many things you can be assured of, but this is one of them. Try spending fifteen or twenty minutes a day using these suggestions as a guide, and you will see growth in your strength, health, courage, wisdom, and most of all in your capacity to love. Watch for evidence of these changes. They will happen much more quickly than you suppose. You will find how responsive the Lord is to those who seek Him.

• **"Oh My God, You Are Here"**

A friend I treasure is Br. David, an Anglican Franciscan friar. He taught that when I pray, whether alone or in church, I should say the following: "Oh my God, *You* are here. . . Oh my God, *I* am here. . . Oh my God, *we* are here."

This focuses your attention on your being with God and His being with you. It becomes an intensive and holy moment. There is a unity of all things in God, and you are intimately a part of all.

Now, after allowing time for quiet realization, turn to God in a natural way, with your fears and anxieties, your puzzlements, longings, angers, hurts, as well as your thankfulness and joy. It may be a simplification to say it is similar to having a conversation with God, but in a special sense of the word that is what we do.

Your 'conversation' with God will vary depending on your needs — your own and those of others for whom you pray. My principal prayer for myself is for God to help me to grow in love and to be able to discern more clearly His will for me. Then I pause to reflect on where I need to grow in my ability to love, where I have failed, and how I can change this. Thinking of His will for me, I turn to some thought that has seemed to strike me vividly from my reading or daily experience. I turn this over to see if I am responding to His will. Are my actions and attitudes in line with the basic teaching of love?

When I don't know what to pray for others, but am worried about them, I hold them mentally in God's healing light and rest in the peace that He cares and knows their needs more clearly than any human mind can.

I try to thank God daily for everything in my life. That means even the *pain*. This suggestion may surprise you. At times, it becomes extremely difficult to do, but, if you can do it, you may be amazed to find that such acceptance frees you to understand or eliminate the grief from your life. I am increasingly aware that no matter what happens, He will give you, if you allow Him, whatever you need to cope with circumstances.

• **"In The Beginning Was The Word**
And The Word Was With God, And The Word Was God" *(John 1:1)*

Though living examples may illustrate a way of life for us, it is the Word found in scripture that gives a concrete foundation to these illustrations. Each day therefore read something from the Bible. If you are in a hurry, this may be only a passage out of the Gospels or Epistles. A normal practice is to read, also, a Psalm and a selection from the Old Testament and frequently at some point during the day a devotional book, classic or modern. A lectionary or other Biblical guide outlining a daily reading program helps. Readers of other faiths can use their own spiritual literature in a similar way.

What astonishes and exhilarates me is that though I may have read a passage before, so often suddenly I will have an entirely new insight as to its meaning and application to my life. A door opens, and I can "see" what I never knew even existed. A mystery becomes clear.

• **"Be Still and Know That I Am God** *(Psalm 46:10)*

Where does prayer end and meditation begin? Perhaps it is like a river flowing into the sea, one merging into the other.

Our tendency is to be always asking God for things. Seldom do we remain quietly in His presence. During these moments of quiet you will learn not to be troubled by the disruptive activity of disparate thoughts flashing through your mind. If you don't chase after them, you will find they fade away and you will be left more and more alone with God. You may not be consciously aware of it, but when you are quiet in this way there is an interaction between God and yourself. Bit by bit you grow toward becoming the best of yourself.

• **"You Shall Love God. . .And Your Neighbor"** *(Matthew 22:37)*

What can we say about this kind of love that has not been said already? It is the cornerstone of all major religions. It is at the heart of our existence. And yet how often I am aware of the inadequacy of my love!

Love is the binding thread of all life — a touch of the hand, a friendly glance, a comforting remark, a heroic action, a constructive suggestion, a sharing of grief, a going out of your way to help, a

prayer of intercession. It is as varied as life itself, crossing all boundaries of race, color, religion, nationality, age.

By learning how to love God more, you learn to trust Him more. You learn how to love and respond to the needs of others.

Lord, teach me to love!

• **"Forgive. . ."** *(Luke 11:4)*

There is no question that being able to forgive is the way to inner healing of hurts and angers.

Harriet finally forgave her father for his rejection of her. She came to realize he loved her as much as he could love any daughter, given his nature and the influences and hurts that affected his life. He had done the best he could. Though he was no longer alive, she understood that symbolically she must also ask his forgiveness. She too had done the best she could and at the same time forgiven herself. It was then she began to experience release from the shadows of the past and could step into the light of the present. There is no peace in us when we hold resentments. For a brief moment then, consider if there is anyone you should forgive, or if there is something for which you should be forgiven in the past as well as now.

• **"Believe. . ."** *(Mark 9:23)*

Our prayers are related directly to the quality of our love and belief. And our belief is tied up with our concept of God. If we have a childish God-concept, if the God we think we know is vengeful or unpredictable or mainly interested in the religion to which we belong, our prayers will reflect these attitudes.

A sense of belief comes more easily to some than to others. You will be helped on your way by reading, by being with others who have a mature faith, and by asking God's guidance about your uncertainties. The Buddhists teach that one must struggle with "the great doubt" before experiencing nirvana. So it is with the Christian, Jew, Muslim or Hindu before he comes to belief. Do not feel guilty about your doubts. Through the barrier of doubt lies belief.

If I had but one gift to give you it would be for you to know *with certainty* that God loves you beyond all human comprehension as His unique creation (there has never been another person like you and never will be). God wants the best for you as He waits for you to seek Him for help. He wants you to know He is always there waiting. You are in God and *everyone* is in Him. The eternal power is in you and you are in the eternal power though you may not fully realize it now. As this understanding comes, you will be enriched beyond all possible conception.

Mirror For The Moon

BY SAIGYŌ (1118-1190)
Translated by William LaFleur

fukaki yama ni
kokoro no tsuki shi
suminureba
kagami ni yomo no
satori o zo miru

In the mountains' deep
Places, the moon of the mind
Resides in light serene:
Moon mirrors all things everywhere,
Mind mirrors moon . . . in satori now.

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PHOTO BY CARL G. KARSCH

A leading surgeon
turns to healer Oral Roberts
to regain the use of his hands

A Surgeon's

Oral Roberts University—known in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as ORU—is a visual wonder. It looks like the twenty-first century or a well-designed world's fair. The interiors of its buildings have a spacious openness. Its Vice-Provost for Health Affairs, Dr. James Winslow, is a large man—energetic, athletic, handsome, dark-haired, with direct eyes and a cordial manner. Dressed in a blue pin-striped business-suit, he stretched out in his chair and spoke with the self-assurance characteristic of surgeons. Although a prodigious worker responsible for the huge medical complex currently being built at ORU, he appeared to us wholly unhurried. He is a man whose generous heart and mind are rooted in his faith.

Nightmare

By WILFRED ECKHART

WHEN James Winslow began mowing his lawn that summer afternoon he had no way of knowing it would end in a nightmarish accident.

"What I did was incredibly stupid," he says. Leaving the mower running, he leaned down to pull away some debris. Inexplicably the blades caught his fingers.

As he yanked them back, he was stunned by what he saw—pieces of bone, shreds of skin, gushing blood. A surgeon's hands are his tools. Dr. Winslow, young as he was, was one of the country's leading orthopedic surgeons. A rare precision-instrument had been spoiled.

He took himself as fast as he could to his clinic and found that his partner who believed as he did in the healing power of prayer happened to be away in Guatemala.

His other partner—equally expert, but no believer in healing prayer—looked at his hand.

"Go to Joe Boyle in California," he finally said. "It's a long, hard trip, but Joe's the best surgeon there is, and you know it."

"No," Dr. Winslow said after thinking it over, "I want you to do it."

"If it didn't work, Jim, I couldn't live with a bad result," the partner said. "We're in a peck of trouble, you know."

But Dr. Winslow insisted, pointing out that every minute counted.

Before the operation Jim asked that he not be given an anesthetic because he wanted to experience what his own patients had to. Afterwards he elected to go home. He felt his wife Sue, a nurse,

could give him the same kind of care he could get in a hospital. Besides, he was a strong advocate of out-patient treatment.

His hand was painful enough, but he also had to hold it above his head. This was very trying. For the first time in his life he got depressed. He tried to talk and think himself out of it. He prayed and prayed. But his hands continued to grow worse. Skin-grafts were tried, but they didn't take. His fingers looked terrible. Swelling mounted halfway up his arm.

His two partners were sympathetic. They suggested that even though he might never be able to perform surgery again—every surgeon's nightmare—he ought to remain at the clinic in a diagnostic capacity.

The proposal depressed him more.

One night he said to his wife: "You know, Sue, I have to get some help."

Since they lived in Tulsa, Sue suggested he call their good friend Oral Roberts. Although Dr. Winslow played golf with the spiritual healer, he had never talked with him about such matters.

"I don't see that Oral could do anything I can't," he said.

Another day, though, Dr. Winslow fell into such despair that he decided to make the call.

"I heard you had trouble and I thought of coming over to see you," Oral Roberts said. He does not force himself upon anyone, though Dr. Winslow suspected he had been praying for him. "Why don't you come over and see me?"

Oral Roberts more or less insisted. He probably did this because part of the healing process lies in making an effort. For Dr. Winslow to put down his disinclination to go see his friend became an act of faith—it showed he wanted to be healed.

When he arrived at the healer's, he poured out all of his despair. As he finished, Oral Roberts said, "Do you believe God wants you to go on like this?"

Dr. Winslow tried to explain the enormity of his feelings about the accident. In the first place, he had never wanted to be anything but what he was. Then, too, the lawn-mower business had been all his own fault. It had nothing to do with God. And, though his partners wanted him to stay on at the clinic on a diagnostic basis, he was positive he would never again operate. "I guess," he said, "I need to know that God is going to help me tolerate that awful fact."

Oral Roberts looked at him. "Quit worrying about the future," he said. "There are three points I want you to remember. First, God wants you to be in good health. Second, He will do what He can within the limits of what you allow Him to do for you. And third, if you feel sorry for yourself, He can't do anything."

Following this, they said a simple prayer for healing. Then he looked at Dr. Winslow again and asked, "Do you believe your hand will get well?"

"Yes."

"You don't sound convinced."

"Well, I am," Dr. Winslow said.

"You sure don't convince me."

"I said I believed!"

The famous healer looked at him for the third time and said, "Do you?"

Yes!"

The word came out of Dr. Winslow with the utmost conviction this time, no doubt as a result of the way Oral Roberts had been questioning him.

Years later, looking back at this episode, Dr. Winslow says, "Oral Roberts is the greatest guy on earth to get you to say what you need to say. He forced me to express my faith that without a shadow of a doubt my hand was going to be all right. And, from that moment on, everything began to look better. In a few days my fingers, which were peeling, dark, and swollen, began to turn pink. I was even able to move them a little."

To his own patients Dr. Winslow tries to explain that prayer is an important part of the process of healing. "Process" is a key word for him.

"I have been asked whether I've ever seen a broken bone healed instantly by prayer. No, I have not seen a bone healed instantly in its totality, but I have seen the initial process taking place. I've seen a whole raft of people with healing processes in progress and then, months later, I would not even recognize what had been wrong with them if I hadn't had their records."

Within six weeks of his visit to Oral Roberts, the skin of Dr. Winslow's hand healed and the hand itself grew more and more mobile. After eight weeks, Dr. Winslow was back in surgery—a miracle of the healing *process.*

•

WE are on "the watershed between a dying civilization based on individualism, once arrogant, now abject, and a collective civilization yet to be formed in which the free development of each will be the condition for the free development of all." We are thus in "the passage from an epoch of individual despairs to one of shared hope in an ever richer material and spiritual life."

From *Mystic & Zen Masters* by Thomas Merton

THE GOOD PERSON INSIDE EVERYBODY

(continued from page 24)

allow disillusionment to spoil the opportunity that joining the church gave her to sing in the choir. She simply stayed on and sang.

Shifting her attention to less personal ways of communicating with strangers, she attended law school at Boston U. (she had been unable to get into Harvard Law, where her father and grandfather went, because in those days women were not admitted) and then the New England Conservatory of Music.

"With all that higher education," I said, "what made you decide to become an actress?"

Even as I posed the question, it was clear why Estelle had made such a choice. For a woman of such capabilities, such seriousness and such directness, what other career at that time could have provided as broad an opportunity to do what she wanted? Where better than in some form of theater could she communicate as she wished to?

"I could never be an actress like the great ones," she said. "To be like that you've got to dwell almost exclusively on yourself. They get married a lot, but they really think only of themselves. They have to. It's their job."

In the early days, she had some of this egotism. ("I was interested only in myself—in finding out who I was, what I could and couldn't do.") From interest in herself she had gone on to interest in society—in finding out what it was, what being a success in it meant to people who made it, what society expected of them in return. It was obvious she was referring to her departure from her highly-paid job on *The Today Show* to start acting in the theater.

"That was the time when I was most serious about trying to communicate with the good person inside people," she said. But this ambition was bound to come to naught in today's theater and all her interest nowadays was focussed on her twin daughters (one at Barnard, another at Sarah Lawrence), her private life, her reading.

I finally found a chance to express my amazement that a person of such strength of character should feel as she said she did.

She threw me a last vivid blue look through the curls and said, "You're right, you know. Next fall, I'm setting out on a five-month tour with *Miss Margarida* as well as *Krapp's Last Tape* by Samuel Beckett. And I know what will happen. In spite of everything I've just told you—all of which is true—I'll still be trying to communicate with all the strangers out there. I can't shake that. It's a real need in me."

—PAUL GRIFFITH

LETTERS RECEIVED

"'Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'"

These words of Jesus become my call to prayer today. I follow His leading and turn away from all outer pressures and disturbances: I release any thought of anxiety or concern. As I consciously close my mind to all but the loving presence of God within me, I feel any weight lifted from my mind, soul, and body.

Prayer is the channel through which I claim my oneness with God's good. As I pray, I am guided into right answers, into perfect health and strength, into increased faith and understanding. Prayer reveals to me the complete abundance of God's love.

. . . May the Light of the Lord be ever upon you and your daily needs.

—G.S., *India*

"It is difficult for me to write a statement on prayer because, having been a cantor and still serving from time to time as a cantor/educator, I find it irreverent to speak disparagingly of prayer (that is, of traditional prayer) and yet I have not achieved what might be considered a viable alternative.

I believe it would be good to be in touch with similarly-minded people such as yourself and would welcome all responses.

—M.A., *New York*

"Here in England there are many interfaith group-prayers who meet regularly. I feel sure this is the way spirit is working amongst us these days. Everybody feels the need of God but not all are prepared to admit this fact.

—D.E., *London*

"Your work with Fellowship in Prayer must be very satisfying since it attracts such a wide spectrum of interesting people. It must afford you the opportunity of many new insights on religious thought, life, and prayer. This wider perspective is a welcome evolution from the narrow denominational views of former years.

—J.L., *New York*

NOTICES & COMMENT

PIONEERS. As Fellowship in Prayer passes the middle of its thirteenth year of existence, the more we appreciate those "intelligent, perceptive people" who compose our Associate Members. Some of them have been supporting the Fellowship since its earliest days. It seems fitting that on this page we begin to set out regularly, as we have long wanted to do, the names and biographies of these "pioneers" without whom the Fellowship would not have survived.

MILDRED SEYDELL, of Atlanta, Georgia, has been one of our sturdiest and staunchest supporters. Now in her ninetieth year, Mrs. Seydell was always active. At nineteen she was sent to France by her father to study at the Sorbonne. There she met two Belgian brothers, Paul and Max Seydel, both of whom fell in love with her. She married Paul, a chemist who built up a multimillion-dollar chemical dye business in New York. After World War I, cheaper dyes were invented, and the business went broke. To help out in this crisis, Mrs. Seydell decided to become a newspaper reporter ("I had no writing background. I'd been to the Lucy Cobb Finishing School in Atlanta, where all they taught you was to have faith in God and hook a husband"). She was more than good at it and soon became a regular columnist for Hearst, specializing in Hollywood interviews although she also got interviews with royalty in Europe and Mussolini. (She added the second "l" to her husband's name to make it "more balanced" as a pen-name). When Paul died after restoring the family fortune and siring two sons, she ended up marrying Max, by then a widower. He and she lived abroad, published a book titled *Come Along to Belgium,* and in 1967 came home to Georgia. In this country, they fostered cultural interchanges between Belgium and the U.S. At Emory University in Atlanta they created a library collection of valuable information relating to Belgium, for which effort Mrs. Seydell was awarded The Order of Leopold from the Belgium government. The Seydells also published the famous *Seydell Quarterly* for nineteen years. In addition to carrying on so much work, Mrs. Seydell was an indefatigable hostess to celebrities visiting Atlanta. In her suburban home there is a "celebrity chair" in which the famous are invited to sit and pose for a photographer. Through all this, her interest in Fellowship in Prayer was constant. Her contributions have taken as many forms as possible—from the offering of her own writing to the support of the distribution of this publication to the libraries of colleges and universities across the country. For all of which we now wish to express the deepest gratitude and appreciation to Mildred Seydell—a real pioneer.

Who Are You?

(Continued from page 1)

You know that world peace begins with you. As you achieve a fuller inner peace it flows into every situation in which you are involved, creating an environment for more widespread peace between all people.

Many of you are active in your churches, synagogues, and temples, while some of you direct your spiritual activities into something other than organized religion. But a trait all of you have in common is that in a sense you are spiritual pioneers. You are forerunners of what is to come eventually. You have that *magnanimity* of soul and mind, that keen perception of spirit, that allows you to realize all humanity is united in God and it is through prayer that we continue to grow in this awareness.

Thank you for being who you are.

WE WELCOME DONATIONS (they are tax-deductible) of any amount. Our purpose is to have as many people as possible participate in Fellowship In Prayer. You, as donor, will receive a card certifying you as an Associate Member in the Fellowship. In addition, you will be sent the equivalent of a subscription to this bi-monthly publication.

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YOUR MEDITATION

In Old Testament days, children leaving school were given a little scroll of scripture to tie around their wrists to refer to throughout the day. From your morning meditation choose a scripture to bind around you for the day. Do not look for new thoughts and connections in the text, as you would if you were preaching! Do not ask, 'How shall I pass this on?' but, 'What does it say to me?' Then ponder this Word long in your heart until it has gone right into you and taken posession of you.

—From *Search For Silence* by Elizabeth O'Connor

FELLOWSHIP PRAYER for AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

Please pray for the Fellowship—that we may be true to God's leading—that many more Associate Members will join us so that through prayer God's peace for the world may become more and more a reality.

If

YOU
WOULD
LIKE US
TO PRAY
FOR YOU OR
FOR OTHERS TOO,
LET US KNOW.

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Suggested BOOKS

Prayer

Michel Quoist: PRAYERS (Sheed & Ward). Realistic, beautiful meditations rooted in our own times.

Thomas Merton: CONTEMPLATION. Image. Spare. Brilliant. Incisive.

Myanaponika Thero: THE HEART OF BUDDHIST MEDITATIONS. (Samuel Weiser). Excellent insights.

Gopi Krishna: The AWAKENING OF KUNDALINI (E.P. Dutton). Interesting Hindu approach to enlightenment.

Mysticism

Evelyn Underhill: MYSTICISM (Meridian). The definitive book on the subject.

Guidance

Paul Tournier: A PLACE FOR YOU. THE MEANING OF PERSONS (Harper & Row). This world-famous psychiatrist is always lucid and helpful.

Alan W. Jones: JOURNEY INTO CHRIST (Grove Press). Exciting spiritual guidance.

Theology, History, Biography

Walpola Rahula: WHAT THE BUDDHA TAUGHT (Grove Press). One of the best books to understand the subject.

Wing-Tsit Chan: THE WAY OF LAO TZU (Bobbs-Merrill). Good background well presented.

God Too Is Unhappy

Rebbe Barukh's grandson, Yehiel, came running into his study, all in tears.

"Yehiel, Yehiel, why are you crying?"

"My friend cheats. It's unfair. He left me all by myself. That's why I am crying."

"Would you like to tell me about it?"

"Certainly, Grandfather. We played hide-and-seek, and it was my turn to hide and his turn to look for me. But I hid so well that he couldn't find me. So he gave up. He stopped looking. And that's unfair!"

Rebbe Barukh began to caress Yehiel's face, and tears welled up in his eyes. "God too, Yehiel," he whispered softly, ". . . God too is unhappy. He is hiding and man is not looking for Him. Do you understand, Yehiel? God is hiding and man is not even searching for Him."

—From FOUR HASIDIC MASTERS by Elie Wiesel